

**FY 2001 BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS**  
**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**  
**ADDENDUM 1**  
**July 5, 2000**

**PROVIDER INQUIRIES (Intermediary)**

In FY 2000, HCFA installed FTS2001 toll free lines to handle provider telephone inquiries. The new toll free lines and numbers delivered calls to the existing Intermediary phone systems. **(Note: These are Medicare provider inquiry lines, not data lines for EDI connectivity.)** The costs associated with this toll-free service will be paid centrally by HCFA and should not be considered by contractors in future budget requests. However, Medicare Contractors will still be responsible for all other internal telecommunications costs and devices such as agent consoles, handsets, internal wiring & equipment (ACDs PBX, etc.) and any local or outbound telephone services and line charges. The transition to toll free provider telephone service reflects an increased focus on customer service for providers. To the extent feasible, provider inquiry standards will be compatible with beneficiary standards. Contractors shall meet the FY 2001 provider inquiry BPR standards no later than July 1, 2001.

In keeping with our FY 2000 Beneficiary efforts, we are maintaining our pursuit of HCFA's strategic plan goal of becoming a customer-centered organization. HCFA is focusing on providing improved service to all customers, including Medicare providers. The FY 2001 Intermediary provider Inquiry BPRs are designed to encompass HCFA's Strategic Plan and facilitate improving customer service. The FY 2001 BPRs continue to reflect the Agency's commitment to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, and the Government Management Reform Act of 1994. HCFA requests that each Intermediary prioritize its workload in such a manner to ensure high quality service to all providers. HCFA expects that each Intermediary will continue to prioritize its provider inquiry workloads in the following sequential manner:

- 1) Telephone Inquiries,
- 2) Written Inquiries,
- 3) Provider Outreach to improve Medicare customer service.

**PROVIDER TELEPHONE INQUIRIES – (Activity Code 13006) - See Attachment 1 as well as the Telephone Customer Service Web Site (<https://www.hcfa.gov/medicare/callcenter>) for Definitions (Unless otherwise specified, Beneficiary and Provider Definitions will be the same.)**

The FY 2001 Budget and Performance Requirements for Telephone Inquiries are intended to further demonstrate HCFA's commitment to customer service by requiring that contractor budgets for telephone inquiries are based on key performance measures. The measures are designed to be representative of the life cycle experience of the caller from *Pre-Contact* or from call inception to *Post-Call* or after call wrap-up. The measures will allow HCFA to ensure that Intermediaries are providing **quality** customer service and that they are doing this **efficiently**.

The measures provide HCFA a complete picture of the operations associated with the contractor's handling of customer inquiries. The measures are balanced across quality, cost, and time in order to ensure that they reflect the agency's priorities, the contractor's operations, and acknowledge available resources. To the extent possible, all of the performance measures shown below should be captured using existing systems and infrastructure already established for beneficiary inquiries. Contractors may also implement manual systems to capture and report required data to HCFA, if that is more cost efficient. Contractors shall report any limitations to their ability to capture and report provider telephone inquiry data to their regional office and to the Deputy Director of PBEG (CHPP) no later than January 1, 2001. Instructions will be included in the April release that will ensure full compliance no later than July 1, 2001.

Standard definitions and detailed calculations for each of these measures have been developed and are provided as Attachment 1. The definitions and calculations are also posted on the Telephone Customer

Service web site and unless otherwise specified, Provider telephone inquiries definitions and calculations will be the same as Beneficiary inquiries definitions and calculations.

During FY 2001, HCFA will be developing, testing and issuing standardized training processes and materials for provider telephone Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to supplement the processes and materials currently being maintained.

**Instructions:**

All provider telephone inquiries are to be processed in accordance with the guidelines shown below and will be reported using Activity Code 13006.

Required provider performance measures are listed below:

Pre-Contact Measures (Note: All specified information must be captured and reported to HCFA on a monthly basis. This information may be captured manually, if necessary)

1. Report Total Calls Offered to the provider call center for the month, defined as the number of calls that reach the call center's telephone system, which can be split up according to trunk lines in instances where a call center is taking calls for Part A, B and other non-HCFA calls.
2. All existing systems related to inbound provider calls to the center should be programmed to acknowledge each call within 20 seconds (4 rings) before an agent, IVR or Automated Call Distributor (ACD) prompt is reached. This measure will not be required to be reported, but must be substantiated when requested.
3. The monthly All Trunks Busy (ATB) Internal Rate shall not exceed 10%. Any exceptions to this performance level should be reported to HCFA.
4. For callers choosing to talk with a Customer Service Representative (CSR), 97.5% or more telephone calls shall be answered within 120 seconds; with no less than 85% being answered within the first 60 seconds.
5. If callers encounter a temporary delay before a customer service representative is available, a recorded message will inform them of the delay. The message will also request that the provider have certain information readily available before speaking with the agent. During peak volume periods, the message shall indicate a preferred time to call.

Note: IVRs should be programmed to provide callers with an after-hours message indicating normal business hours (It is not necessary to duplicate this message if the caller is informed of the normal business hours via the telephone system prior to being delivered to the IVR).

Call Handling Measures (Note: All specified information must be captured and submitted to HCFA on a monthly basis. This information may be captured manually, if necessary.)

6. Capture Call Abandonment Rate, which is the percentage of provider calls that abandon their call from the ACD queue. This should be reported as three separate measures:
  - 1) Calls abandoned up to and including 60 seconds,
  - 2) Calls abandoned up to and including 120 seconds, and
  - 3) Calls abandoned after 120 seconds.
7. Capture the monthly Average Speed of Answer. This is the amount of time that all calls waited before being connected to a CSR. It includes ringing, delay recorder(s) and music.

8. CSRs must identify themselves when answering a call, however the use of both first and last names in the greeting will be optional. In order to provide a unique identity for each CSR for accountability purposes, where a number of CSRs have the same first name, it is suggested that the CSRs also use the initial of their surname. If the caller specifically requests that a CSR identify himself/herself, the CSR should provide both first and last name. Where the personal safety of the CSR is an issue, call center management should permit the CSR to use an alias. This alias must be known for remote monitoring purposes. CSRs should also follow local procedures for escalating calls to supervisors or managers in situations where warranted.
9. Capture monthly Average Talk Time (which includes any time the caller is placed on hold by the CSR).
10. Handle no less than 80% of calls to completion during the initial call - minimizing transfers, referrals and callbacks.
11. Track Call Center call handling productivity, calculated by the total calls handled divided by the total CSR FTEs in the center.
12. Capture Occupancy Rate, the percent of time that CSRs spend in active call handling (i.e., on incoming calls, after call work or outbound calls).

Post-Call Measures (Note: All specified information must be captured and reported to HCFA on a monthly basis. This information may be captured manually, if necessary.)

13. Capture monthly Average After Call Work Time (wrap-time), which includes all the time that the CSR needs to complete all administrative work associated with call activity after the customer disconnects.
14. Make substantive callbacks within 2 working days in 100% of the instances when calls are not completed at first contact- ensuring that providers obtain closure on open issues or questions no less than 80% of the time. (This does not include calls that are referred.)

#### Staffing

15. As needed, develop a corrective action plan to resolve deficient performance in the call center, and maintain results on file for regional office (RO) review.
16. Develop a proficiency test to be used for new CSRs and as needed for existing personnel. Target no less than an 80% first time pass rate for the proficiency test.

#### Workload

Provider Telephone Inquires workload (Workload 1 in CAFMII) is the cumulative inquiries as reported on the HCFA-1566, Line 35, Provider Column.

### **PROVIDER QUALITY CALL MONITORING**

1. Measure and report the quality of service continuously by employing the Quality Call Monitoring (QCM) Process developed for beneficiaries in FY 2000.
  - Monitor no more than 10 calls per CSR per quarter for quality. Individual CSR data shall be analyzed regularly, areas needing improvement identified, and corrective action plans should be implemented and documented.
  - The sampling routine must ensure that CSRs are monitored at the beginning, middle and end of the month (ensuring that assessments are distributed throughout the week) and during morning and afternoon hours.

- Participate in national and regional calibration sessions organized by HCFA.
- Contractor call centers should conduct regular monthly calibration sessions.